

For Release: Thursday, June 18, 2015

15-1206-BOS

NEW ENGLAND INFORMATION OFFICE: Boston, Mass.

Technical information: (617) 565-2327 • BLSInfoBoston@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/

Media contact: (617) 565-2326 • BLSMediaBoston@bls.gov

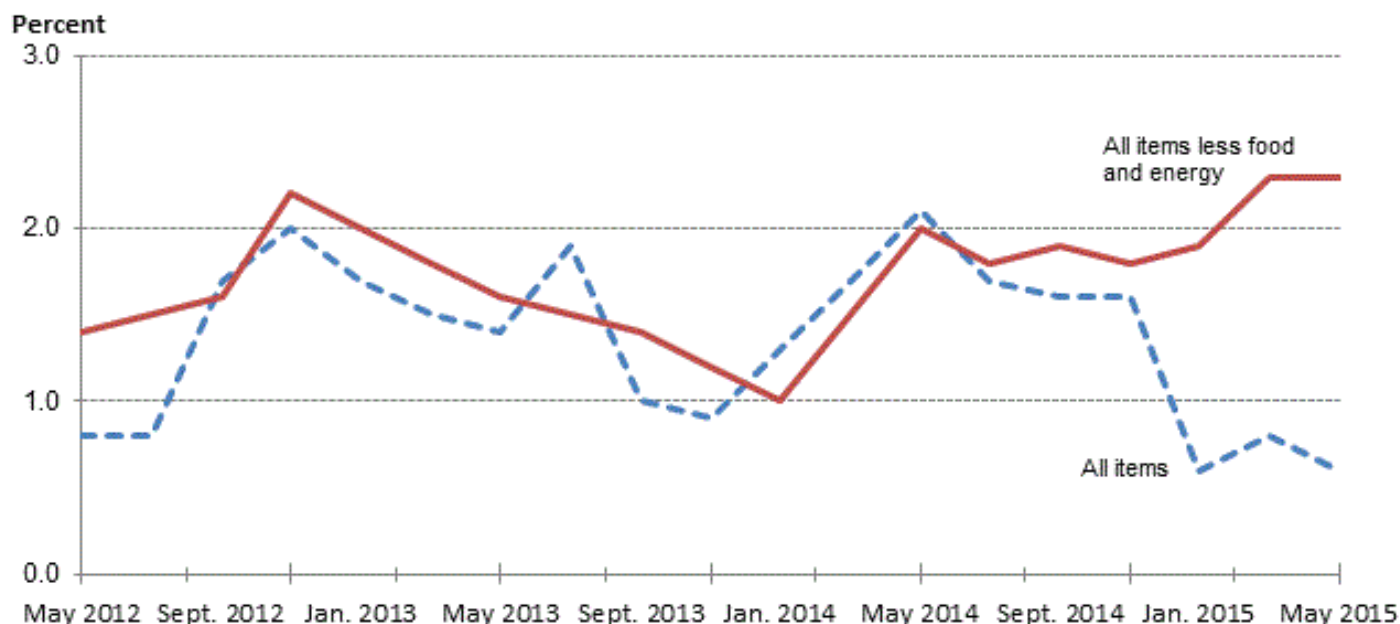
Consumer Price Index, Boston-Brockton-Nashua — May 2015

Area prices edged down 0.1 percent over two months; up 0.6 percent from a year ago

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston-Brockton-Nashua area edged down 0.1 percent in May, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that the two-month decrease was mainly due to lower prices for energy, down 6.0 percent over two months. Higher prices paid by area consumers for shelter, up 0.8 percent, and recreation, up 1.3 percent, largely offset this decrease. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bimonthly changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months the Boston CPI-U rose 0.6 percent. The increase was largely attributable to higher shelter prices, up 3.2 percent. (See [chart 1.](#)) Lower energy prices paid by area consumers, down 16.4 percent, nearly offset the modest increase.

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, May 2012 - May 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices were unchanged since March. Grocery store prices, also known as food at home, edged down 0.3 percent. A rise in the prices for food away from home (0.7 percent), or restaurant prices, offset this rise.

From May 2014 to May 2015 the index for food rose 1.7 percent mainly due to higher grocery store prices (+1.5 percent) and, to a lesser extent, higher restaurant prices (+2.0 percent).

Energy

The energy index was down 6.0 percent over the two months, mainly due to decreases in the prices paid for electricity (-12.8 percent) and utility (piped) gas (-30.1 percent). These decreases were partially offset by higher prices for gasoline, up 10.2 percent from March. Area motorists paid \$2.685 per gallon of gasoline in May.

Energy prices were down 16.4 percent from a year ago, attributable to lower gasoline prices, down 27.4 percent. Contributing to the decline were lower prices paid by area consumers for utility (piped) gas, down 23.3 percent from one year ago. Partially offsetting these declines was a 17.6-percent advance in local electricity prices.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy was up 0.5 percent from March. Increases in the indexes for shelter (+0.8 percent) and recreation (+1.3 percent) led the advance.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.3 percent, with higher shelter costs, rising 3.2 percent from May 2014, being the main cause of this increase. This marked the 47th consecutive annual increase in the local shelter index. Contributing to the over-the-year rise in the all items less food and energy index were increases in the prices paid for recreation (+3.7 percent) and apparel (+5.3 percent).

CPI-W

In May, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 256.286. The CPI-W was down 0.3 percent over two months and edged up 0.1 percent over the year.

The May 2015 Consumer Price Index for Boston-Brockton-Nashua is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 19, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 89 percent of the total population and (2)

a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 24,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price change from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch17_a.htm.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Mass.-N.H.-Maine-Conn. consolidated area covered in this release is comprised of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth and Suffolk Counties and parts of Bristol, Hampden, and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts; parts of Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire; part of York County in Maine; and part of Windham County in Connecticut.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service (800) 877-8339.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2015	May 2014	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015
All items.....		257.013		256.839	0.6	-0.1	
All items (1967 = 100).....		747.015		746.509			
Food and beverages.....		254.369		254.437	1.6	0.0	
Food.....		254.813		254.940	1.7	0.0	
Food at home.....		246.775	246.370	245.976	1.5	-0.3	-0.2
Food away from home.....		267.776		269.653	2.0	0.7	
Alcoholic beverages.....		253.194		252.662	0.7	-0.2	
Housing.....		258.940		255.605	2.3	-1.3	
Shelter.....		299.626	300.903	302.001	3.2	0.8	0.4
Rent of primary residence ⁽¹⁾		309.395	309.957	311.139	3.3	0.6	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences ^{(1) (2) (3)} ...		319.459	320.818	321.843	4.0	0.7	0.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{(1) (2) (3)}		319.459	320.818	321.843	4.0	0.7	0.3
Fuels and utilities.....		282.995		241.306	-2.9	-14.7	
Household energy.....		242.720	237.014	202.045	-3.6	-16.8	-14.8
Energy services ⁽¹⁾		246.727	246.410	203.852	5.1	-17.4	-17.3
Electricity ⁽¹⁾		278.362	277.778	242.717	17.6	-12.8	-12.6
Utility (piped) gas service ⁽¹⁾		182.007	182.185	127.153	-23.3	-30.1	-30.2
Household furnishings and operations.....		130.748		129.335	1.2	-1.1	
Apparel		154.746		152.581	5.3	-1.4	
Transportation.....		187.388		192.761	-9.0	2.9	
Private transportation.....		185.906		190.081	-9.4	2.2	
Motor fuel.....		206.730	204.333	227.776	-27.4	10.2	11.5
Gasoline (all types).....		204.182	201.836	225.082	-27.4	10.2	11.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁽⁴⁾		200.132	197.509	221.794	-28.1	10.8	12.3

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2015	May 2014	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{(4) (5)}		213.384	212.179	232.594	-26.2	9.0	9.6
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁽⁴⁾		208.104	206.317	225.290	-25.0	8.3	9.2
Medical care		596.534		599.276	1.8	0.5	
Recreation ⁽⁶⁾		116.047		117.594	3.7	1.3	
Education and communication ⁽⁶⁾		150.604		150.823	1.8	0.1	
Other goods and services		443.709		445.594	1.5	0.4	
Commodity and service group.....							
Commodities.....		191.245		191.587	-3.0	0.2	
Commodities less food and beverages.....		157.898		158.371	-6.3	0.3	
Nondurables less food and beverages.....		203.587		205.757	-9.1	1.1	
Durables.....		113.164		112.068	-1.2	-1.0	
Services.....		316.081		315.409	2.9	-0.2	
Special aggregate indexes.....							
All items less shelter.....		242.916		241.728	-0.6	-0.5	
All items less medical care.....		243.756		243.492	0.6	-0.1	
Commodities less food.....		161.679		162.109	-5.9	0.3	
Nondurables.....		227.849		228.948	-3.4	0.5	
Nondurables less food.....		205.991		207.920	-8.2	0.9	
Services less rent of shelter ⁽²⁾		351.835		347.274	2.5	-1.3	
Services less medical care services.....		296.827		295.920	3.0	-0.3	
Energy.....		225.327	221.101	211.791	-16.4	-6.0	-4.2
All items less energy.....		263.740		264.837	2.2	0.4	

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015	May 2015	May 2014	Mar. 2015	Apr. 2015
All items less food and energy.....		266.022		267.318	2.3	0.5	

(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

(6) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.